

The Friends Meeting House  
Corner Watchung and East Third Street  
Plainfield, Union County, New Jersey

<sup>6</sup>  
HABS-~~NY~~-142

HABS  
NJ  
20-PLAFI  
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of New Jersey

ADDENDUM  
PLAFI

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Seymour Williams, A.I.A., District Officer  
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

HABS  
N.J.  
20-PLATE  
1-

The Friends Meeting House  
Corner Watchung and East Third Street  
Plainfield, Union County, New Jersey

Owner: Society of Friends

Date of Erection: 1788

Architect:

Builder:

Present Condition: Good

Number of Stories: One and balcony

Materials of Construction: Foundation - stone

Exterior walls - frame  
construction, shingles

Interior walls - wainscot  
and plaster

Inside brick chimneys

Roof - pitch with slate,  
original shingles

Historical Data:

The original structure was built in 1788 upon plans which had been completed in 1787. The meeting house measured 38 by 48 feet. Three hundred pounds was subscribed for its erection.

Several changes have taken place since it was originally built. About 1870 the southern portion was destroyed by fire, but it was restored in the style similar to the unburned portion.

In 1895 the center folding partition which separated the men and women was removed. The folding doors completely enclosed an open well on the balcony. These were closed in winter weather. Seats arranged in tiers formed the balcony seating. When the folding partition was removed the seats from the balcony were also removed and the balcony today serves as a children's classroom. At this time the center girder was also removed. The original pews were slightly remodelled as to length, but remained otherwise unchanged.

Ten years ago a new basement and heating plant were installed, and at the same time new glass and wood partitions enclosing the stair wells were erected. When the new slate roof was put on, the roof trusses were strengthened to carry the increased load.

The original wagon shed slightly remodelled is still in the yard of the meeting house.

Bibliography:

Dailey, Joseph W. Woodbridge and  
Vicinity New Brunswick A. E.  
Gordon, 1873

Walter C. Rutt  
Supervising Historian

Approved:  
Seymour Williams  
SEYMOUR WILLIAMS, A.I.A.  
District Officer

Rev. Jan. 23. 37. T.J.W.

## PLAINFIELD FRIENDS' MEETING HOUSE

An addendum to  
Friends' Meeting House  
Watchung Avenue and East Third Street  
Plainfield, New Jersey  
in HABS Catalog (1941)

Address: Northeast corner Watchung Avenue and East Third  
Street, Plainfield, Union County, New Jersey.

Present Owner  
and Occupant. The Society of Friends

Present Use: Religious services.

Brief Statement  
of Significance: A typical example of the simple Friends'  
meetinghouse in New Jersey.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## Physical History

- A. Original and subsequent owners: The Society of Friends.
- B. Date of Erection: 1788.
- C. Builder, Suppliers, etc.: Members of the Society.
- D. Notes on Alterations and Additions: Stairs to basement added (originally the structure had only a crawl space). Repairs made at one end in 1870's because of fire. In 1922 a slate roof was substituted for wooden roofing. Recently a wing was added to connect the meetinghouse to the Sunday School (originally the carriage house).
- E. Sources of Information: North Carolina State College, School of Design. Report of David N. Weed, student architect, 1961.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

## A. General Statement

- 1. Architectural character: A typical example of simple Quaker architecture.
- 2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Over-all dimensions: 48'-1" x 34'-5"; two stories.
2. Foundations: Stone.
3. Wall construction: Wooden, gray-painted shingles covering wooden frame.
4. Porches: On the northwest side there is a one-storied, flat-roofed porch with four, square posts with pseudo-Doric capitals.
5. Chimneys: Two interior chimneys, one at each gable end.
6. Openings:
  - a. Doors: Gray-painted, wooden, vertical board doors.
  - b. Windows and shutters: Ground floor: Wooden, double-hung sashes, eight-over-twelve lights.  
Second floor: Wooden, double-hung sashes, eight-over-eight lights.  
Exterior trim color: Dark green.  
Hand-blown glass in sash frames.  
Solid, rather crude wooden shutters by all windows.
7. Roof:
  - a. Shape, covering: Gable roof with slate shingles.
  - b. Cornice: Simple, wooden cornice with gutter molding.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: Large, open, rectangular meeting room with two, enclosed vestibules (which include stairs) and a second floor, three-sided balcony.
2. Stairways: Two. Simple, two-run stairways.
3. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster and exposed wooden beams.
4. Doors: Wooden, vertical board doors.
5. Heating: Originally two fireplaces, which are now plastered, whose flues are used for the present furnace.

D. Site

1. Orientation and general setting: Northeast corner of East Third Street and Watchung Avenue, facing southwest. Land slopes slightly. The entire block, which now includes several public and commercial buildings, originally was owned by the Quakers.
2. Outbuildings: Carriage house now converted into a Sunday School and connected with the meetinghouse.
3. Landscaping: Random-placed trees.

Prepared by John C. Poppeliers, Architectural  
Historian  
National Park Service  
November 1962.

Addendum to:  
Plainfield's Friend's Meetinghouse  
Watchung Avenue & East Third Street  
Plainfield  
Union County  
New Jersey

HABS No. NJ-142

HABS  
NJ,  
20-PLAFI,  
1-

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240